PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

STH 26 CORRIDOR STUDY
JANESVILLE TO WATERTOWN
ROCK, JEFFERSON & DODGE COUNTIES

Monday, January 10, 2000 5:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Jefferson High School
700 West Milwaukee Street, Jefferson

Tuesday, January 11, 2000 5:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Northside Intermediate School
159 Northside Drive, Milton

Wednesday, January 19, 2000 5:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Riverside Middle School
131 Hall Street, Watertown

Welcome to the second group of public information meetings regarding the STH 26 Corridor Study. We appreciate your attendance and interest in this project. For the convenience of the area public, we have scheduled three public information meetings, one in Jefferson, one in Milton and one in Watertown. **The same information is available at all three meetings.**

This handout and the exhibits on display were prepared to help familiarize you with the project details. We encourage you to view the exhibits on display. Please feel free to ask questions and make comments to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and consultant staff. A comment form is attached to the back of this handout for your convenience in providing us with written comments, which you may leave with us today or mail to us after the meeting. We ask that all comments be returned by Friday, February 4, 2000.

Please note that this meeting is being held in an open house format. There will be no formal presentation today. A continuously running video presentation is available and we suggest that you view the video before reviewing the exhibits on display.

PROJECT SUMMARY

In early 1999, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation - Transportation District 1 initiated a study of transportation needs and solutions along STH 26 from IH 90 at Janesville to STH 60 (East), north of Watertown. This 48 mile study, which has been contracted to the consulting firm of Earth Tech, Inc. of Madison, includes preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS.

This study is considering alternatives for converting STH 26 to four lanes in those sections where this has not already been planned; bypass alternatives for the cities of Milton, Jefferson and Watertown; and accommodating future STH 26 traffic growth through those cities. Prior to beginning this study, a number of projects were either completed, underway or planned for this section of STH 26. Opened to traffic in 1995, the Fort Atkinson bypass was designed as a future four-lane roadway but only two lanes were constructed. Two additional lanes were added in 1999 between Janesville and Milton. Improvements are planned in 2001 and 2002 for the Johnson Creek area at IH 94, with two additional lanes to be added and the interchange to be reconstructed.

Study Purpose. This study is being undertaken at this time for the following reasons:

STH 26 is a Route of Statewide Importance:

- $ Links major Wisconsin communities, including the cities of Milton, Jefferson and Watertown, to the Fox River Valley, Chicago and other points south of Wisconsin
- $ Located midway between the cities of Madison and Milwaukee
- $ Identified as a connector route on the Corridors 2020 Plan

Local Interest in Study:

- $ Serves local economy and transportation needs
- $ The cities of Jefferson and Watertown have requested bypass studies
- $ The city of Milton=s comprehensive plan recognizes the need for studying future expansion and bypass alternatives

Growing Traffic:

- $ Traffic is increasing
- $ Truck traffic is relatively high
- $ Congestion through cities on narrow roadways in older, historic areas is problematic
- $ Current or projected future traffic exceeds threshold for consideration of a four-lane highway

Preserving a Transportation Corridor:

$ Future development may preclude reasonable bypass options
$ Access limits are needed for a safe highway
$ Coordinate land use planning and transportation planning

Study Committees. For planning purposes, the overall project has been divided into three study area segments, each having its own Study Committee to inform potentially affected communities and the public about the study process, to gather information about local needs and to help select the best solution. Segment 1, the South Segment, is the area between IH 90 at Janesville to Fort Atkinson. Segment 2, the Central Segment, is the area from Fort Atkinson to IH 94 at Johnson Creek. Segment 3, the North Segment, is from IH 94 to STH 60 (East) north of Watertown. Study Committees are comprised of members from communities likely to be impacted by alternatives. Each committee contains a mix of elected officials, technical staff, business and other representatives.

Environmental Impact Statement. In compliance with state and federal laws, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared for the proposed improvements of STH 26. The EIS will assess the environmental impacts of alternatives, including: (1) no-build, (2) improvements along the existing rural corridor, with possible relocated alignments along portions of the route, and (3) bypass corridors around the cities of Milton, Jefferson, and Watertown. At its conclusion, the EIS will recommend preferred alternatives.

Access Management. Planning the number of and controlling the location of intersecting roads and driveways is an important consideration of this corridor study. The alternatives have been developed with the following assumptions about future access to STH 26. They assume that for bypasses, access would only be permitted at interchanges. The majority of the side roads would be connected over or under the bypass with a bridge. In a few cases, side roads may be considered for closure. In the areas on the existing roadway alignment, access would be permitted at a few side roads, or at-grade crossings. A minimal number of private crossings for farming purposes only would also be allowed.

Alternatives. One of the main purposes of the public information meetings is to present alternatives. At the first group of public information meetings last June, there were a wide range of bypass alternatives presented for the Milton, Jefferson and Watertown areas. The alternatives presented today have been expanded to include the existing highway as well. The alternatives are divided into three segments, South, Central and North, matching the Study Committee segments. Maps showing the location of these alternatives are included at the beginning of this handout. **It should be emphasized that these alternatives are still subject to modification and are being presented for review and comment at these meetings.** After the public information meetings, the Draft EIS will be prepared. If one of the alternatives appears to be much better than the others at that time, a preferred alternative may be identified in the Draft EIS. Preferred alternatives will be selected in the Final EIS.

South Segment Alternatives. The South segment includes the four lane section completed between Janesville and Milton in 1999. There are three alternatives within the Milton area under consideration, Alternatives S1, S2 and S3.

Alternative S1 provides for a four lane divided urban street through the city of Milton on existing alignment. This through Milton alternative would provide a posted speed limit of 45 miles per hour. Access would be limited with several signalized intersections, meaning that the operating speed would be approximately 40 miles per hour. This alternative would probably require that buildings on one side of the street or the other be removed. The intent would be to preserve the Milton House building with widening and acquisition of right-of-way done to the west in that area.

Alternative S2 provides for a four lane divided rural roadway just east of Milton, with an operating speed of at least 55 mph, with access at two locations. To accommodate traffic from the south and STH 59, this alternative has an interchange near the industrial park, which is in an area planned for future growth. To accommodate traffic on the north side, an interchange would be located on Bowers Lake Road extended to the west. Bridges would separate traffic at existing STH 59, the railroad, Storrs Lake Road and existing STH 26.

Alternative S3 provides for a four lane divided rural roadway further east than Alternative S2, with an operating speed of at least 55 mph, with access at two locations. This alternative is similar to the route that was previously on the city of Milton=s official map. Access at the south side would be similar to Alternative S2. Access north of the city of Milton would probably be an interchange near Klug Road. Bridges separating traffic would be provided at existing STH 59, the railroad, Storrs Lake Road, Bowers Lake Road and Klug Road.

North of Milton, two more lanes are proposed, primarily on the west side. An interchange is proposed at CTH N. At-grade intersections are proposed at John Paul Road, County Line Road and Vickerman Road, while bridges separating traffic are proposed at Pond Road and Old 26. Old 26 would be extended to Business 26.

Central Segment Alternatives. The Central segment begins at the Business 26 interchange on the south side of the city of Fort Atkinson. The other two lanes that were previously planned for the Fort Atkinson bypass would be added. Bridges carrying Banker Road and Hoard Road over STH 26 would be provided. There are five alternatives in the Jefferson area under consideration, two west of the city, Alternatives C1 and C2, two east of the city, Alternatives C3 and C4, and one alternative through the city of Jefferson on existing alignment, Alternative C5.

Alternative C1 is the far west alternative and provides a four lane rural divided roadway, with an operating speed of at least 55 miles per hour, with access at three locations. From the Business 26 interchange on the north side of the city of Fort Atkinson this alternative parallels the railroad tracks on the west side between the two cities. Interchanges are proposed at the south and north sides of the City of Jefferson and at USH 18. Bridges separating traffic are proposed at CTH W, CTH J, CTH N, and several local roads.

Alternative C2 is the near west alternative and provides a four lane rural divided roadway, with an operating speed of at least 55 miles per hour, with access at three locations. Interchanges are proposed at the same locations on the south and north sides of the City of Jefferson as with Alternative C1. An interchange at USH 18 is also proposed, but this interchange is just west of the existing Crawfish River bridge. Bridges separating traffic are proposed at existing STH 26, the railroad, CTH W, CTH J, CTH N, and several local roads.

Alternative C3 is the near east alternative and provides a four lane rural divided roadway, with an operating speed of at least 55 mph. Interchanges are proposed at the south and north sides of the City of Jefferson and at USH 18. The interchange at USH 18 is designed with all ramp movements on the north side to allow the St. Coletta residents to safely walk on the south side of USH 18 without having to cross any interchange intersections. Bridges separating traffic are proposed at CTH K, CTH N, the railroad and several local roads.

Alternative C4 is the far east alternative and provides a four lane rural divided roadway, with an operating speed of 55 mph. This alternative coincides with Alternative C3, diverging near Vogel Road. This alternative avoids direct impacts to St. Coletta=s facilities. Three interchanges are proposed with this alternative. The interchange on the south side of the City of Jefferson is proposed at the same location as with Alternative C3. An interchange at USH 18 is also proposed, but this interchange would be located east of St. Coletta, just skirting the Jefferson Marsh. An interchange with Junction Road is proposed to provide access to the north side of the city of Jefferson. This alternative would match back into STH 26 at the CTH Y intersection in the village of Johnson Creek. Bridges separating traffic are proposed at CTH K, CTH N, both locations with CTH Y and several local roads.

Alternative C5 provides for a four lane divided urban street through the city of Jefferson on existing alignment. This through Jefferson alternative would provide a posted speed limit of 45 miles per hour. The access would be limited with several street closures and several signalized intersections, meaning that the operating speed would be approximately 40 miles per hour. This alternative would probably require that buildings on one side of the street or the other be removed.

Once STH 26 is back on the existing alignment, two more lanes are proposed to be added. Planned improvements will begin in 2001 in the Johnson Creek area and will be completed in 2002. These improvements will add two more lanes and provide signalized intersections with CTH Y, CTH B, the IH 94 ramps and at the entrance to the Johnson Creek Outlet Mall.

North Segment Alternatives. The North segment begins at Baneck Lane about a mile north of IH 94. Two more lanes are proposed to be added between Baneck Lane and the city of Watertown, primarily on the east side of the existing road. There are three alternatives in the Watertown area under consideration, Alternative N1 west of the city, Alternative N2 east of the city, and one alternative through the city of Watertown on existing alignment, Alternative N3.

Alternative N1 is the near west alternative and provides a four lane rural divided roadway, with an operating speed of least 55 miles per hour, with access at three locations. Interchanges are proposed on the north and south sides of the city of Watertown, and at STH 19. Bridges separating traffic are proposed at CTH Y and CTH A, both railroad crossings and several town roads. An interchange at CTH A is under consideration. One benefit to this alternative is that it connects STH 16, STH 19 and STH 26.

Alternative N2 is the near east alternative and provides a four lane rural divided roadway, with an operating speed of at least 55 miles per hour. This alternative would provide interchanges at the south and north edge of the city of Watertown and with STH 16. Bridges separating traffic would be proposed at CTH X and CTH E, the railroad crossing and several town roads. This alternative would coincide with the existing STH 16 bypass, which would be reconstructed to a four lane rural divided roadway and would eliminate all access except at interchanges. Half diamond interchanges with connecting frontage roads would be proposed for CTH R, also known as North Fourth Street, and Oak Hill Road.

Alternative N3 provides for a four lane divided urban street through the city of Watertown on existing alignment. This through Watertown alternative would provide a posted speed limit of 45 miles per hour. The access would be limited with several signalized intersections, meaning that the operating speed would be approximately 40 miles per hour. This alternative would probably require that buildings on one side of the street or the other be removed. A variation of the through Watertown alternative that closely follows the Union Pacific Railroad corridor between Bernard Street and Spaulding Street is also being studied. Information about this alternative is available today.

North of Watertown, two more lanes are proposed to be added, primarily on the east side, although to avoid relocations, there will be several areas where the new lanes are proposed to be added to the west side. The study ends at the STH 60 (East) intersection.

Comparison of Impacts. The EIS will include a comparison of impacts between viable alternatives. Preliminary screening matrices, which are on display today, will be used to

narrow the various corridor alternatives to those that are most viable. These matrices showing the impacts for the South, Cental and North areas are available at today=s meeting.

Real Estate Acquisition. Wisconsin law defines how the Department acquires property necessary for improvement projects. The pamphlet "The Rights of Landowners Under Wisconsin Eminent Domain Law" explains this procedure, and is available today.

Public Involvement. The Department strongly encourages continual information exchange with the public throughout the development of this study. Specifically, any information people have concerning drainage patterns, archeological or historical resources, or hazardous materials or contaminated soils is appreciated.

Proposed Time Schedule. The timetable below indicates the current schedule for the project.

Public Information Meetings #1 ..... June 9, 14 and 21, 1999
Public Information Meetings #2 ..... January 10, 11 and 19, 2000
Draft Environmental Impact Statement completed ..... May 2000
Public Hearings ..... June 2000
Transportation Projects Commission may meet ..... Summer 2000
Public information meetings on preferred alternatives 2001
Final Environmental Impact Statement and
Record of Decision completed 2001
Earliest possible construction start 2008

If the Transportation Projects Commission considers and accepts this project in 2000, it is anticipated that construction would not occur until at least 2008, with right of way acquisition typically beginning no sooner than 2005. Sections of STH 26 would likely be staged for improvement over a period of time.

PROJECT CONTACTS

If you have any questions regarding the information provided in this handout or presented here today or if questions come up at a later time, please contact one of the individuals listed below.

Mr. James Oeth, P.E., *Project Manager*
Earth Tech, Inc.
1210 Fourier Drive, Suite 100
Madison, WI 53717
(800) 548-1530, ext. 151 Fax (608) 836-9767

Mr. Jeff Gust, *District Project Manager*
WisDOT - District 1
2101 Wright Street
Madison, WI 53704
(608) 246-3862 Fax 246-3819

Ms. Kimberly Johnson, P.E., *Public Information Coordinator*
Kjohnson Engineers, Inc.
7818 Big Sky Drive Suite 118
Madison, WI 53719
(608) 829-3858 Fax 829-3996

COMMENT FORM
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS
STH 26 CORRIDOR STUDY
JANUARY 10, 11 and 19, 2000

You may leave the completed form at the registration table, or complete it later and return by Friday February 4, 2000. This form may be used as a mailer by folding it as shown on the reverse side.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Please tell us what Municipality you live in (i.e. City of Watertown, Town of Milton, Village of Johnson Creek): _____

Please tell us what Municipality you work in (if applicable): _____

Please tell us what meeting you attended:

☐ January 10 at Jefferson ☐ January 11 at Milton ☐ January 19 at Watertown

Comments: _____

Please use additional sheets, if necessary.

Kjohnson Engineers, Inc.
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